Subject/USFW Retiree: Edmund Shuda, Jr. Tuesday, September 21, 2004 (#3092104)

Interviewed by: Dorothe Norton

D. Norton:

Thank you for being able to accommodate me a little earlier this morning than we had originally set. It's nice to see you again; you look about the same now as you did then.

Edmund Shuda:

I think so, I hope so!

D. Norton:

Well, the first thing we are going to do is some personal questions, like I'd like to know your birth place and date.

Edmund Shuda:

Well, I was born in Minneapolis in 1925.

D. Norton:

What day?

Edmund Shuda:

March 6th.

D. Norton:

March 6th, okay. And who were your parents, what were their names?

Edmund Shuda:

Edmond and Flora Shuda, I'm a junior.

D. Norton:

Yes, I see that. What were their jobs or their education?

Edmund Shuda:

My dad was a foreman down at General Outdoor Advertisement, he did sign painting. Mother, she was a housekeeper until the kids were in school, and then she started working at the Dale Power's Department Store.

D. Norton:

Oh my gosh, that's gone a long time now. Okay, so where did you spend all of your earlier years then, just in the Minneapolis area?

Edmund Shuda:

I spent most of it, up until World War II started, and then I joined the Marine Corps. Shortly after high school, it was "Goodbye" and they sent me on into the V-12 Program

and to college for two years, and then officer's training, then over to China, and back and forth, then I got out for a while and then I re-enlisted and stayed in for 20 years.

D. Norton:

What high school did you graduate from?

Edmund Shuda:

DeLaSalle.

D. Norton:

DeLaSalle, okay.

Edmund Shuda:

That's down on Nicollet Island.

D. Norton:

And when did you graduate, in 1940?

Edmund Shuda:

In 1943.

D. Norton:

In 1943, okay, and you didn't go to college then, you just went into the Marine Corps.

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, and then they sent me to college.

D. Norton:

Well, that's good.

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah, I got some college out of that.

D. Norton:

Well, while you were still in childhood, did you ever have jobs while you were still in high school?

Edmund Shuda:

Well, I set pins in the bowling alley, had a paper route, the usual things that kids do.

D. Norton:

Yeah, okay. Did you ever go hunting or fishing with your dad or with anybody?

Oh yeah, we went fishing with my dad and my uncle up to the lakes once in a while, and we would take a week of vacation, he'd take a week of vacation and we'd go up to northern Minnesota and fly fishing, that sort of stuff.

D. Norton:

That was fun, huh?

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah, a long time ago.

D. Norton:

Okay. So you went into the U.S. Marine Corps, how many years did you serve?

Edmund Shuda:

21 years, 4 months, and 1 day.

D. Norton:

Oh, my gosh, wow! So what were your duty stations, where did you start?

Edmund Shuda:

Well, first I went to Northwestern University in Evansville, Indiana, then Oberlin in Oberlin, Ohio, and then to Parris Island, to Quantico, back to Camp Lejeune, then I went up to Schenectady, New York, Naval Supply Depot for security, then to Quantico for Air Observer School, then to China, and then back. I got out for about 2 months, got back in and went to Burlington, Washington, and then to Parris Island for Recruiter's School, back to Minneapolis for recruiting duty, then after that I left and went to Camp Pendleton, to Korea, and back. I skipped Camp Lejeune once in there, I think. Anyway, I retired in Lexington, Kentucky from the Marine Corps.

D. Norton:

Okay. Did you get any decorations for your duty?

Edmund Shuda:

No, no.

D. Norton:

So, your job was just in supply?

Edmund Shuda:

No, I was a First Sergeant, ended up as a First Sergeant, Infantryman, and First Sergeant.

D. Norton:

Okay. So, did your military service relate in any way to your employment with the Fish and Wildlife Service?

Edmund S	huda:
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No, none whatsoever.

D. Norton:

Okay. So, then when you got out of the Marines, then you went to school at the...

Edmund Shuda:

When I got out of the Marine Corps, I tried to get a job and I was told I was too old down at the police department, I was too old. Then I took an entrance exam and I worked almost three years for the Post Office. Then I took the Federal Service Entrance Exam, and got called up to the Fish and Wildlife Service and hired in realty.

D. Norton:

Where had you gone to college, though, after you got out of the Marines?

Edmund Shuda:

I didn't.

D. Norton:

Oh, you didn't?

Edmund Shuda:

No, I never finished.

D. Norton:

Okay.

Edmund Shuda:

I was too old.

D. Norton:

You were too old? Okay, so you started with the Fish and Wildlife Service in about 19..?

Edmund Shuda:

1964. Well, wait a minute, in '64 I retired. It was 1967.

D. Norton:

Okay. Well, before we get into that, I want to know when and where and how you met your wife.

Edmund Shuda:

I was on recruiting duty in Minneapolis.

D. Norton:

Oh, how fortunate for you!

And I went up, she worked up at the (unclear) Bank, and I used to go up there in my dress blues afterwards and take care of it, and I met her there.

D. Norton:

Oh, good. So, when and where did you get married?

Edmund Shuda:

We got married in Minneapolis in 1953.

D. Norton:

Oh, you just had your 50th anniversary, 51st now! That's good. So, do you have any children?

Edmund Shuda:

I got three.

D. Norton:

Okay, and what are their names?

Edmund Shuda:

Mike is the oldest, Cathy is in the middle, and Dan is the youngest.

D. Norton:

Okay, and what are they doing now?

Edmund Shuda:

Mike is a surveyor for the state of Minnesota, Cathy is in, I don't know just what position now, she is now at the Crown Plaza in Eagan, and Dan works for Honeywell.

D. Norton:

Oh, okay. So, now we'll start with, so you started with the Fish and Wildlife Service in 1967, and that was because you had taken the test and passed.

Edmund Shuda:

I was called, yeah.

D. Norton:

You were referred to the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, I had a lot of calls after taking the test for various and sundry types of things, but I didn't want to move to St. Louis or Chicago, or some of those other high class towns.

Well, good. Okay. So, your duty stations then were always in the regional office in Minneapolis?

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, I always worked out of the regional office.

D. Norton:

Of course, you traveled a lot throughout the region, I'm sure.

Edmund Shuda:

Oh, yeah.

D. Norton:

So, what did you feel that the pay and benefits were like when you came to work for them?

Edmund Shuda:

\$5,000 a year was the pay.

D. Norton:

That wouldn't be much today would it?

Edmund Shuda:

No! Well, it isn't as bad. We went to a realty conference once, and somebody had brought a flyer from the post office back in 1931 or '32; they wanted a wildlife biologist with five years' experience in the field, and they were going to pay him \$1,900 a year! So, you know, things have changed.

D. Norton:

Oh, yes, quite a bit, yeah. Okay. Did you have promotion opportunities then once you started with Fish and Wildlife?

Edmund Shuda:

Oh, yes, I started as a GS5. When I was hired, my position description was Legal Instrument Examiner Realty, so I said I was the first liar they ever had!

D. Norton:

Did you socialize with any of the people that you worked with?

Edmund Shuda:

Not too much. We had a carpool, Hartman and myself, and Jim Monnie, Don Gray. I was the furthest out so I picked them up, and went in back and forth, that way we had a parking space in the Buzza Building!

Yeah, that was the world's worst place to park. That's when I started, was in the Buzza Building, too.

Edmund Shuda:

That was fun.

D. Norton:

Sometimes we had to walk two blocks! So did you ever get involved in any of the recreation that they did, like the ball teams or the golf?

Edmund Shuda:

No, I wasn't a golfer, I wasn't really a jock.

D. Norton:

So, did your career have any effect on your family?

Edmund Shuda:

Not really.

D. Norton:

Okay, that's good. If it did, I hope it was a positive, anyway. So you left the service when you were eligible to retire?

Edmund Shuda:

I retired and I waited until, it was something about her Medicare/medical from her work and I retired in 1985.

D. Norton:

And what grade and title were you then?

Edmund Shuda:

I was a Realty Specialist, GS11.

D. Norton:

Good. So, what kind of training did you receive for your jobs when you came over to Fish and Wildlife Service?

Edmund Shuda:

Well, I went out in the field and did a lot, I went out with appraisers in the field, they sent me to Farm Manager Rural Appraiser's School, and the one for Realty Specialist Appraisal at MIA Appraisal School in Chicago.

D. Norton:

Oh, okay.

So, you get quite a bit of training.

D. Norton:

That's good.

Edmund Shuda:

You had your symposiums or seminars, you had yearly or a couple of times a year in various and sundry places.

D. Norton:

Well, that's good that they did give you training.

Edmund Shuda:

Oh yeah, they give you training.

D. Norton:

So, what hours did you work? When you were at the regional office of course were usual, but how about when you were in the field?

Edmund Shuda:

When you go out and you do an appraisal, trying to contact people to get your easements or buy the land, you met them on their time; it might be in the evening or it might be during the day. Of course with rural, it's pretty much during the day, but there are a few times you had to go out and contact them at night.

D. Norton:

Okay. So, what tools and instruments did you use?

Edmund Shuda:

Pens, pencils, aerial photos.

D. Norton:

Instruments, any surveying?

Edmund Shuda:

No, no surveying instruments.

D. Norton:

Okay.

Edmund Shuda:

You might use a compass and pace, an approximate and you put a tie or a marker there on what you're working on. The surveyors would then survey it.

Okay. Did you witness any new service inventions while you were working?

Edmund Shuda:

I wouldn't say they were inventions, but the surveyors got more into the use of the computer, and even there in the office they became more and more linking the field offices with the regional office with computers. Not like it is now, but they were working at it and developing. In fact, I think (unclear) Christenson was working on the program they use, and he developed the appraisal program they used.

D. Norton:

That's good. Does he still work there?

Edmund Shuda:

He retired in that same bunch you went out with.

D. Norton:

(Unclear) Christenson, huh?

Edmund Shuda:

That's what I heard.

D. Norton:

Do you know where he is now?

Edmund Shuda:

No, I don't. He was from Michigan, too.

D. Norton:

Okay, I will just write him down here and see if I can find him. I tell you, Law Enforcement helps. See, sometimes they can find people if they're not on the list already.

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah. How about Bill Russman?

D. Norton:

Who? Oh yes, out in Litchfield. Yes, I did him and Trebesch out there, too.

Edmund Shuda:

I don't know if Wanda came back and finished out her time with the service or not. I know she came in for Rosemary Little's retirement, I think it was.

D. Norton:

Oh, Rosemary Little, I've not been able to reach, she is quite sick.

Yes, I know she was, she had arthritis so bad, and her shoulder was bad. She used to be quite an act at square dancing.

D. Norton:

Um hmm, I know she did, yeah. I sent much to her, too, and I'm sure if any of her offspring are taking care of her they would open those or she would open them. I've asked them to just please give me a call. Last time I talked to her was over a year ago, and she told me then that she wasn't doing very well. Okay. So did you ever work with any animals when you were out in the field?

Edmund Shuda:

No, no animals.

D. Norton:

Well, what support do you think we received locally, regionally, federally? You know, how did the public react to land that we may have wanted to buy from them?

Edmund Shuda:

Some were against it, especially when we would buy out on these farm countries, a lot of them were not really happy with it. They liked the idea that we are going to save it, but they didn't like the idea we're taking it off the tax rolls. We sat at many a town hall meeting where they heard it; we did get them through. We bought one where they didn't want her to sell it to the Fish and Wildlife Service. She said, "Okay, I won't sell it to them, you buy it." But nobody offered to buy it.

D. Norton:

So, do you think the agency-community relations were good then?

Edmund Shuda:

So-so, some relations were good.

D. Norton:

Did they usually put it like little notices in a paper in these towns when you were coming out, or?

Edmund Shuda:

No.

D. Norton:

Nothing like that, it was just all done person to person?

Edmund Shuda:

Well, we had leads that the field people had got. Well, see this guy, he'd like to get an easement here, we would like to buy that, and we've talked to him, you go talk to him to make the appraisal. We would have the appraisal approved and make the offer.

So, what projects were you ever involved in, any special?

Edmund Shuda:

I was somewhat involved on the beginning of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Association.

D. Norton:

Oh, that's good.

Edmund Shuda:

Primarily, I ended up the last several years in the regional office keeping the records, acquisition records, (unclear) of all the refuges in the region, the waterfowl production area. We owned easements, we owned, quite a project in records.

D. Norton:

Okay. Any major issues that you had to deal with?

Edmund Shuda:

No, I didn't deal with any, I wasn't in that level.

D. Norton:

Okay. Did you ever feel that there was a major impediment to your job or to your career?

Edmund Shuda:

The impediment was getting through the state approval to buy the land; you had to go to the commission with Skip Humphrey in charge of it.

D. Norton:

So who were your supervisors, like when you started, who was your supervisor?

Edmund Shuda:

Bob Jorgenson.

D. Norton:

Bob Jorgenson!

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, Bob Jorgenson was the head of Realty, and I worked for Al Franz, I was under Al Franz, and Bill Swanson was in there, and Tom Follrath, Bill Cushman. I didn't work too much with Cushman, but he was there. I did some paperwork on Sherburne and Muscatatuck. Mel Lund was more or less my boss under Franz and Harrison.

D. Norton:

Yes, I think he's on the list, I think he's retired now, too.

Edmund Shuda: Who, Lund?

D. Norton:

Yes.

Edmund Shuda:

He should be.

D. Norton:

Yes, I'm sure he is. So, were there any individuals you feel help shape your career with Fish and Wildlife?

Edmund Shuda:

I think it was Don Gray, who's passed away; he helped me get into keeping up the records. Eileen Hegdal, she was just a record keeper, I think she helped.

D. Norton:

(unclear).

Edmund Shuda:

Eileen Hegdal, oh, she passed away a long time ago.

D. Norton:

Okay, oh, I think I remember who she was.

Edmund Shuda:

She was the one they stole her purse and they found it in the stairwell, and she had all kinds of trouble because they were using her driver's license, and the woman who was using it didn't even look like the picture on the driver's license! She was an amazing lady.

D. Norton:

So, do you remember now who was the President or Secretary of Interior or Fish and Wildlife Regional Director when you started?

Edmund Shuda:

I can remember because I remember they gave him a shotgun when he retired down at the Bussa Building.

D. Norton:

How about Burwell?

Edmund Shuda:

Burwell. He was the head, and the guy came up from Texas.

Travis Roberts?

Edmund Shuda:

No, before him. Heavy set, round face, glasses.

D. Norton:

Oh, Sam Jorgenson.

Edmund Shuda:

Sam was up there, but not him. Well, I can't remember his name. Travis Roberts, and Galen, and the other one, oh I can't remember, he was right before Buterbaugh.

D. Norton:

I don't know either, I'm going to try and get these. You know, they used to have a picture of all the regional directors up there on the wall, but they've taken them down. They've done quite a bit of remodeling and decorating, it's very, very nice. I talked with the regional director's secretary and she said they're all down in storage. So, I'm going to ask Donna Stanek, who is the one I refer to when I bring things in. See if they couldn't go down and just make a list of who they were and the years so I have that, because it's difficult to remember. I remember Bob (unclear) was RD when I started, and I had a lot of respect for that man, I thought he was a very good Regional Director.

Edmund Shuda:

He was very quiet, but he got the job done.

D. Norton:

Art Hughlett.

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, Art Hughlett was there, I worked for him quite a bit.

D. Norton:

Or Walt Shaffer, do you remember Walt Shaffer? I'm sure he has passed away by now.

Edmund Shuda:

And what the heck was his name? We had to send all of our Wetland Acquisitions through him. He wore that cap with the earflaps hanging out like that, and his ears held it up!

D. Norton:

I can't remember either who that would have been.

I can't think of his name, then the other one was... I can't think of his name but he played a tuba, he got that tuba...

D. Norton:

Bill (unclear)

Edmund Shuda:

How did you guess?

D. Norton:

Because when you said that he still plays and he is in a band that is Dixieland type, and he still drives a Volkswagon and has the tuba in the back seat.

D. Norton:

Who do you think are the individuals who helped shape the Service into what it is today?

Edmund Shuda:

That was pretty much above my level working. But, you know you had like Ed Crozier and (unclear), I can't remember the third guy...

D. Norton:

Charlie Johnson.

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, (unclear) Minnesota. They shaped all the background work that goes into developing that; that was a lot of work.

D. Norton:

Yes, I thought it was.

Edmund Shuda:

And Sherburne and Muscatatuck, and (unclear)

D. Norton:

Yes. He's passed away.

Edmund Shuda:

There was a lot of work, and they really did a lot to shape the little bit I know of what was going on.

D. Norton:

That's good.

Edmund Shuda:

John Winship and...

Do you think the changes in the administration affected the work that we were expected to do?

Edmund Shuda:

I think so, because they all had different concepts of where the Fish and Wildlife Service was supposed to go. You know, it's just like when I started, you had the Bureau Sports of Wildlife and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, and then they became one. So yes, all administrations are going to change into their idea of what they want done. Whether it's good or bad, I'm not going to say.

D. Norton:

Well, there's nothing we can do about it at all anyway.

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah, they're long gone. Just so it keeps those little deposits every month.

D. Norton:

I know that so many people, when they see me are, "Oh Dorothy, are you ever lucky you quit when you did." And I would say, "Why?" Well, this, this, this....

Edmund Shuda:

I had the same thing back then.

D. Norton:

Yes, I know it. I know that for many years I had to beg to be sure we'd come out not in the red. The refuges kind of bailed us out all the time when we needed help and that was great because Ede Donovan was my mentor. But it's a lot of different now, the agencies are being better funded and they have better equipment and the cases have differed quite a bit now, and refuges too, I'm sure there's a lot of changes there.

Edmund Shuda:

When I was working we had to do the same thing on record keeping; we had to put so many hours on keeping the records for fisheries, we needed this money, refuges this money, to help balance the books. It wasn't a heck of a lot, but it was something that had to be done.

D. Norton:

Yes, that's for sure. What was the high point of your career with Fish and Wildlife Service? Special award, or....?

Edmund Shuda:

I got an award, working with Al Ludden; he and I got an award for a workbook for people who are realty people, appraisers and that. If you have a question and look up what the possible answer is, we worked up a workbook referring to all of the different

directives that had come out at one time or another, legal opinions or what have you, that had the answer for that, and I got a nice award for that.

D. Norton:

Did you ever have a low point in your career?

Edmund Shuda:

No, not really a low point.

D. Norton:

That's good.

Edmund Shuda:

Sometimes I wasn't happy with the way things were going, but.

D. Norton:

Did you ever have a dangerous or frightening experience like when you were out in the field at all?

Edmund Shuda:

No.

D. Norton:

That's good.

Edmund Shuda:

It's not frightening, but you get out there in the winter time out there, and nobody's living on that road, and the land you want to check is down a half mile or three quarters of a mile down, you've got to wade through the snow to get down and see it! That gets a little bit...

D. Norton:

Well, that's a little frightening.

Edmund Shuda:

That's weird, but....

D. Norton:

Not really frightening.

Edmund Shuda:

I was a lot younger then too, that's the big thing.

D. Norton:

Well, how about the most humorous experience, do you remember anything that was really, really funny?

No, nothing really funny, I can't think of anything funny.

D. Norton:

What do you like to tell others about your career? Like the neighbors or people that you meet, different things?

Edmund Shuda:

When they ask, I tell them, "Well, we helped buy these waterfowl production areas and easements so you keep seeing these pretty ducks that people like to hunt."

D. Norton:

What were some of the changes that you observed in the Service those years you worked there, like in the personnel or the environment, or?

Edmund Shuda:

The big changes were the coming of the computer, everything was put into computer. When I first started, I forget what the heck they called that machine, but they had it in a room by itself, and they made the secretaries go in and type it up, and then it would print a tape that sounded like a teletype, and then they would have to run that tape through and that would print and that typewriter would then type the deeds, and it was horribly noisy. Those poor girls, they couldn't stand it. Now, they just type it in and the thing and there it is!

D. Norton:

Okay. What are your thoughts on the future, like where do you see the Service heading in the next decade?

Edmund Shuda:

That is a good question, I hope... Now periodically I get a Service Statement, they've got more new refuges that I hadn't ever thought of but they are doing that. I hope we can get an approval to operate in some of these, like they had these areas they were buying when I was there over in Wisconsin, waterfowl production areas. It's not a high priority, but it would be nice to have more of that so that stuff is maintained, and I think the service has worked in making people more aware that you don't want to drain everything out and build on everything, but keep those areas as greenery for the people.

D. Norton:

Also nice pamphlets that they send about various refuges, they do one for fish now too.

Edmund Shuda:

Oh, I just got the one for the refuges.

Probably because you worked in refuges. The original director we had was Bill Hartwig; he is now head of refuges for the whole Service in Washington. I don't know who is our Director of Refuges now.

Edmund Shuda:

I don't either.

D. Norton:

I only met the Regional Director once since she's been here.

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah, they got those big, fancy badges now.

D. Norton:

Yes, that's true.

Edmund Shuda:

What ever happened to Tom Follrath?

D. Norton:

Well, he is retired now, and you know his wife passed away?

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, I heard that.

D. Norton:

Yes, and he just recently got remarried. He hired Betty {Pierson-Gerose}, and she's now down there from Massachussetts.

Edmund Shuda:

Oh, she went to Massachusetts?

D. Norton:

Yes, she was in Massachusetts, and she just applied for the job down there and she got the job down in Atlanta. She was really pleased, I think, that Tom hired her.

Edmund Shuda:

I can remember when she came here, and then she went out in the field.

D. Norton:

Yes, out to Mark Twain.

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, and then I got something...

And Lynchfield.

Edmund Shuda:

As a matter fact, I thought, Betty {Gerose}, "Who is she? I don't know," I went into the office to pick up money for the get-together and my reaction was, "Oh it was her!"

D. Norton:

Yes, she got married.

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah.

D. Norton:

Okay, this is about the end of it Ed. Do you have anything you would like to donate, like any photographs or anything?

Edmund Shuda:

No, I haven't got anything that's... well, they sent a lot of stuff that was in the archives that we went through and had to destroy. Well, they started doing away with keeping all of those records out in archives.

D. Norton:

This committee is called the Heritage Committee, it's just something that was formed three years ago, and I think it's very good because everybody who's worked for us, and usually pretty high-caliber people, but they all have different ideas as to how things could be done or should have been done or happy that they were done the way they were done, and just everybody tells you something a little bit different, but it makes us still feel good because you know that the people that worked for the Fish and Wildlife Service were... You know, when I worked in Washington, as soon as there would be an opening in another division or another department or whatever, a higher grade, everybody would apply for those jobs. In the Fish and Wildlife Service you didn't see too much of that, they did lose some to the Postal Service when they moved into our building but, for the most part, even the clericals stayed with the Fish and Wildlife Service because we were treated like humans.

Edmund Shuda:

Yes, I know most of the secretaries went to (unclear) Realty when we had an opening, because we were a grade higher than they were in the other branches. Earlier I said it was Dick Uptegraft.

D. Norton:

Uptegraft, yes.

And Jack West. I know I was going through a bunch of old stuff and I took it down to Jack West and he said, "Oh, we don't need those old pictures in there."

D. Norton:

Well, I want to thank you again for the time, and it's good to see you again.

Edmund Shuda:

It's good to see you.

D. Norton:

Maybe next year you'll come out to the big doings, it's fun. That's how I got on this committee, by the way, because the first three they had at the Training Center, the first three years, the first one I think was only about a dozen people, so it was usually the regional directors, I believe, and then the next year it got to be a few more, the year I went was the third year, there were about 76 of us there.

Edmund Shuda:

Yeah, I saw Rollin Siegfried and Carol Benson and several names I recognize.

D. Norton:

This year at the Training Center we had really a good, good, good crowd because so many had never had the opportunity to see it, and it's really a wonderful place. They can train a whole group of people at one time. As a matter fact, when we went for the Law Enforcement part there were our agents who were at their annual in-service, probably half of them, but they also had enforcement people from other departments, like National Park Service and some of those others. They had like 400 and some in training. It was wonderful, and the lodgings are great, and it's just peaceful and quiet. It's just a wonderful, wonderful place. We are very fortunate that we have that. Oka, Ed, well thanks again.

Note: Names in brackets { } = unverified spelling

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